

February 9, 2026

The Honorable Brian J. Feldman

Chair, Education, Energy, and the Environment Committee

2 West Miller Senate Office Building

Annapolis, Maryland 21401

RE: Support for SB 89, Election Law, Incarcerated Individuals, Voter Hotline and Voting Eligibility, Voting Rights for All Act

Dear Chair Feldman,

Maryland Latinos Unidos (MLU) is honored to express our strong support for Senate Bill 89, Election Law, Incarcerated Individuals, Voter Hotline and Voting Eligibility, Voting Rights for All Act, which is scheduled for a hearing in the Senate Education, Energy, and the Environment Committee on February 11, 2026.

Many Marylanders held in local detention settings remain legally eligible to vote, including people who are detained pretrial or serving sentences that do not disqualify them. Yet across the country, eligible voters in jail frequently face barriers to registration, ballot access, and accurate information about their rights. National research has documented that despite eligibility, people in jail often cannot vote because systems do not reliably provide the information and practical pathways needed to cast a ballot.

SB 89 addresses these barriers by improving access to clear information and practical assistance for incarcerated individuals, including the creation of a voter hotline and clearer processes tied to eligibility. This approach is aligned with Maryland's existing public information work on voting rights restoration and helps ensure that legal rights are meaningful in practice.

Implications for Latino and immigrant Marylanders

For justice impacted Latinos, SB 89 expands freedom and opportunity by strengthening civic participation and reducing the confusion that suppresses eligible voters. Civic exclusion compounds reentry barriers, increases distrust in public systems, and weakens community power in decisions that shape housing, education, and public safety. When Maryland ensures accurate information and reliable voting access, it supports accountability, representation, and a healthier democracy that includes families who are too often sidelined.

MLU can amplify the impact of SB 89 by partnering with reentry organizations, detention outreach programs, and legal services to distribute multilingual voting rights information, support eligible individuals with registration and mail in ballot requests, and ensure families understand eligibility rules so they can advocate for their loved ones.

MLU urges the Education, Energy, and the Environment Committee to issue a favorable report on SB 89, affirming Maryland's commitment to a democracy that is accessible, accurate, and inclusive.

Sincerely,

Carlos Orbe, Jr.

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